

**James Madison to James Monroe, July 26, 1816.
Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,
1900-1910.**

TO JAMES MONROE.¹

¹ From the original in the New York Public Library (Lenox).

Montpr. July 26, 1816.

Dear Sir

Herewith are the communications from Mr. Adams. He pinches Castlereagh not a little. I always suspected that the enlistments & apprenticeship of captured Negroes, in the W. Inds. would be the refuge agst. the allegations on our part.²

² In his note of April 27, 1816, to Adams, Lord Castlereagh said: "By the Act for the abolition of the Slave trade and the consequent order in Council (of which copies are inclosed for the information of the American Minister) all negroes captured at Sea are condemned as prize to His Majesty and the disposal of them after condemnation is specially limited to their enlistment into the army or navy by which they at once by Law acquire the Rights of freemen, or to their being bound for a limited time as free apprentices to persons capable of teaching them some Trade or Handicraft."— *D. of S. MSS. Despatches.*

But, if the former be for life, & the latter for 14 years even for those of mature age, both be *forced*, as the

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law & order in council shew, how can either be a situation in which the unfortunate blacks are protected in the *privileges of freedom*? Nor is it conceivable that the act of Parlt, which contemplates evidently the *African* trade, and *seizures on the high seas*, can be fairly applied to negroes in the U. States in a slavery originating with G. B. herself, seduced or forced therefrom with her sanction, and recd. on board vessels within the waters of the U. S. As the B. Govt. [illegible] a full [illegible] into the charges agst. its officers, whether wth. a view to discredit this Govt. or for whatever other purpose, it will be proper to promote the establishment of the truth. It will be particularly proper to keep in the from of the transaction, the inviting proclamation of the B. Commander, and the bondage de facto into which, it is admitted, that the negroes are placed, under the name of freedom & protection. I hope Mr. Adams will not fail in the most suitable stage of the business to do justice to this view of the subject. It will put our charges on defensible ground, even if we fail to establish what is fairly to be believed, that the captives or fugitives in question were sold into the ordinary slavery of the W. Indies. The object of Ld. Castlereagh evidently is to draw the question to a point most difficult of proof, and in the failure of it to avail himself of an ostentatious zeal for an impracticable investigation.

Yours